

Post exposure prophylaxis after sexual exposure to HIV (PEPSE)

What is PEPSE?

Post-Exposure Prophylaxis after sexual exposure (PEPSE) is a treatment strategy to prevent HIV infection after possible exposure to the virus. It involves taking a 28-day course of three HIV drugs.

The sooner PEPSE is started after exposure the more likely it is to work. PEPSE will not work if started more than 72 hours after exposure.

PEPSE is not 100% effective and does not prevent HIV infection in all cases.

Should I request PEPSE?

Current UK guidelines recommend assessing the need for PEPSE after unprotected sex for:

- Men who have had sex with a male partner
- Men or women who have had sex with someone with HIV infection. This is especially important if they are not taking effective HIV treatment
- Men or women who have had sex with a person at high risk of having HIV infection

If this has happened you should attend Whittall Street Clinic during opening hours or, outside of opening hours, your local Accident and Emergency department.

For more information on Clinic opening hours please visit www.umbrellahealth.co.uk or telephone **0121 237 5700**

Starting PEPSE

The drugs used for PEPSE may cause side effects.

You will be asked for details about your possible exposure to HIV infection.

When the risk of contracting HIV is estimated to be low, PEPSE will not be recommended but follow up tests for HIV and sexually transmitted infections are advised.

When the risk of contracting HIV is estimated to be high PEPSE will be offered. The final decision about starting this is yours.

If you decide to take PEPSE you must have a HIV test to ensure that you do not already have HIV.

For PEPSE treatment to be fully effective it must be taken exactly as instructed and for 28 days.

Taking PEPSE and follow-up

If you begin PEPSE treatment, you will be given a 5-day starter pack and further information.

PEPSE may cause side effects such as nausea and diarrhoea. Most side effects can be treated and are not life threatening.

We will arrange a follow-up appointment after 1-4 days at the GU outpatient clinic at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH), Birmingham.

You will be able to discuss any side effects and obtain the rest of the 28-day PEPSE course at this appointment. You will also need blood tests to make sure PEPSE is safe for you.

We will arrange another appointment at the GU outpatient clinic 2 weeks later for more blood tests. You will also be offered tests for sexually transmitted infections at this visit.

You will need a final HIV test at Whittall Street Clinic 3 months after you finish your PEPSE. We will arrange this for you.

PEPSE should never be thought of as a substitute for using condoms

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